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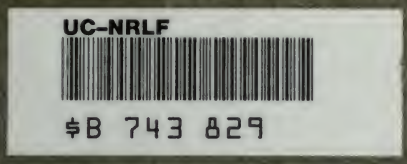

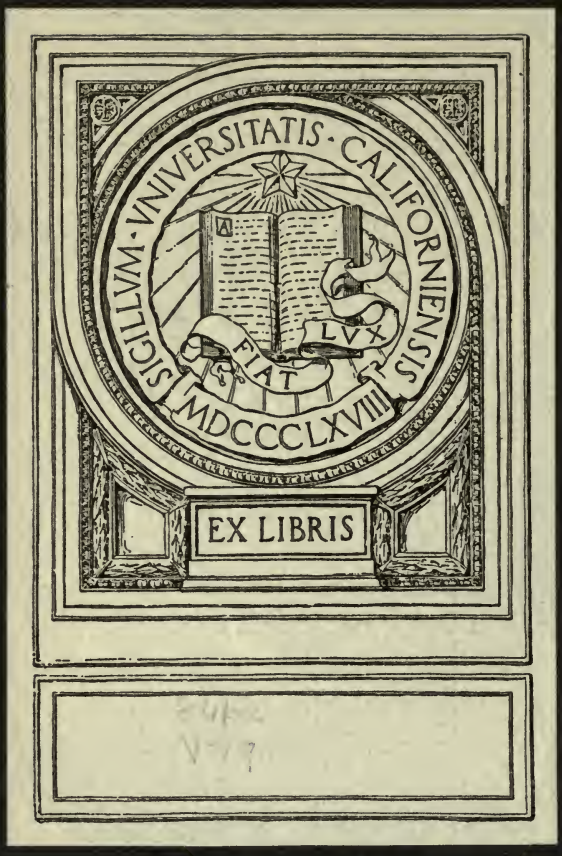
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THE VIOLATION

OF THE

NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM.

Belgium. Ministère des affaires étrangères

WITH A PREFACE BY

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Minister of State (Belgium).

At present Belgian Minister in London.

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THE VIOLATION OF THE NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM.

Belgium, a neutral country, living in calm and complete friendship with the neighbouring Powers which had guaranteed her neutrality, an industrious nation, accustomed to liberty and devoted to the arts of peace, has been dragged against her will into the most frightful war which has ever devastated the world.

What circumstances compelled this little people of seven million souls to take up arms and to dare the German colossus? Why has she been exposed to all the horrors of invasion? Why has she poured out her blood and material resources without counting the cost?

The documents collected in this pamphlet furnish the answer to these questions. They set out the unswerving loyalty of Belgium and her inflexible resolve to fulfil all her duties to others as well as to herself. They set out also the cynical promises made by Germany and the brutal threat which accompanied them. Belgium needs no eloquence to succeed in her suit before the civilised world. It is enough to set out the facts. They furnish irresistible proof of the justice of her cause.

I.

The international status of Belgium was determined by the Treaties of 1831 and 1839. When the Belgian provinces separated from Holland and formed themselves into an independent and sovereign State, the representatives of the great Powers assembled at the Congress of London determined the character of the new State by two successive agreements. The "Treaty of the Eighteen Articles" of the 26th June, 1831, provides that Belgium shall form a perpetually neutral State, and that the Powers should guarantee that perpetual neutrality. The "Treaty of the Twenty-four Articles" of the 15th November, 1831, contained the following passage:—

> "Article 7. Belgium, within the limits fixed by Articles 1, 2, and 4 shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State. She shall be bound to observe the same neutrality towards all other States."

Lastly, on the 19th April, 1839, a final Treaty concluded between Belgium and Holland reproduced this provision, and the great Powers, Austria, France, and Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia, acceding to the Treaty, declared that all its articles "are placed under their guarantee."

Belgium, therefore, is and has been since she came into existence, a neutral State. Her neutrality is permanent and the creature of treaty, determined upon by Europe, decreed by Europe, and accepted by Belgium.

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In 1870 the Franco-Prussian War broke out on our frontier and exposed us to serious perils. England preserved us from them. She approached simultaneously France and the North German Confederation, and required them to make a formal declaration that they would respect Belgian neutrality, threatening, if that neutrality were violated, to intervene in the war. The belligerent States bound themselves by fresh treaties, which gave an added solemnity to the Treaty of 1839.

For more than 80 years Belgium, resting upon these solemn treaties, has lived peaceably, applying herself to the development of the freest institutions in the world, making herself illustrious in the arts, in commerce, and in industry; making her moral personality known throughout the world so that it has become one of the factors in universal civilisation.

For some years, however, well-informed people as well as the political and military world have been rendered uneasy by the complications of European foreign policy. The Morocco crisis, the competition between nations for colonial possessions, the tension in diplomatic relations, the incidents of the Balkan crisis, gave rise to fears lest some incident should suddenly assume dangerous proportions, and result in a collision which might degenerate into a general war. In such case Belgium would find herself in a position more precarious than that of 1870. The war of 1870 remained localised throughout. Great Britain preserved neutrality, and as a judge between nations protected Belgium. Since then the whole face of Europe has been changed. The Powers had formed themselves into opposing groups. It was doubtful whether England could exercise her position as guarantor as effectively as in 1870.

Anxieties arising from international events caused the Belgian Government and Parliament to determine to strengthen the national defences. As early as 1909 a law abolishing *remplacement* had established personal military service, laying upon every family the obligation to give a son to the Army. In 1912 M. de Broqueville introduced, in the name of the Cabinet, a Bill making the obligation general, whose effect would be to double the effective strength of the Army. The new system was put in force in 1913, but could not produce its complete results until 1917.

When the ultimatum addressed by Austria to Serbia was published, the gravity of the situation became apparent to everyone. It was decided to take precautionary measures. On the 28th July officers on leave and soldiers on furlough were ordered to rejoin their corps; on the 29th three classes of militia were called up, placing the army on the footing of *paix renforcée*. The fortresses of Antwerp and the Meuse were put in a state of defence. These preparations were not the consequence of any ideas hostile to any of our neighbours, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Davignon, made an announcement to this effect to our principal Legations. They were dictated by elementary prudence. If France and Germany were to come to blows, our position would become very critical. It is true that no one anticipated an attack from either Power on neutral Belgium. But there was the risk

that the operations of armies stretched out along our frontiers should overflow into our territory; and for a long time military writers had discussed openly the contingency that German or French troops, seeking to reach enemy territory by the shortest road, should make use of the valley of the Meuse or the roads of Luxemburg.

The uneasiness of the Government increased when they learnt on the evening of the 31st July, that communication by rail between Germany and Belgium had just been interrupted. During the night orders for mobilisation were issued. Holland had already taken a similar measure. The Minister for Foreign Affairs immediately sent to the European Chancelleries a note in which he described the position of Belgium. He drew attention to the fact that the country had always fulfilled scrupulously the duties of neutrality, and was inflexibly determined to maintain it. The measures which the Government had just taken, he said, had no other aim but that of putting Belgium in a position to fulfil her international obligations. "It is obvious that they never have been nor can have been undertaken with any intention of taking part in an armed struggle between the Powers or from any feeling of distrust of any of those Powers." Their only object was to ensure the observance of neutrality.

II.

In spite of the gravity of the situation there was a general hope in Belgium that Germany and France would respect the neutrality of Belgium.

Already on the 31st July, M. Klobukowski, the French Minister, in conversation with M. Davignon, had reassured him as to the intentions of the Republic. And on the next day, the 1st August, he stated that he was authorised to inform him that the French Government would respect the neutrality of Belgium. It was only in the contingency that this neutrality should not be respected by some other Power that France could be led to alter her attitude.

Similar action was expected from Germany. Herr von Below the German representative at Brussels, when informed by M. Davignon of the statement made by M. Klobukowski replied that he had not been instructed to make any similar statement to the Belgian Government, but that "his personal opinion as to the feelings of security which Belgium had the right to entertain towards her Eastern neighbours" was well known. On the previous evening, the Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Baron van der Elst, had a long conversation with Herr von Below; he reminded the latter of an interesting exchange of opinion which he had had with his predecessor Herr von Flotow: this conversation took place in 1911 as a result of a newspaper controversy; certain newspapers had stated that in the event of a Franco-German war Germany would violate the neutrality of Belgium. It had been suggested that a declaration in the German Parliament would serve to calm public opinion, and dispel regrettable mistrust. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg,

when informed of this suggestion had replied that Germany would not violate Belgian neutrality, but that a public statement to this effect would weaken the military situation of Germany in regard to France who, secure on the Northern side, would concentrate all her energies on the East.

At a later date, in 1913, Herr von Jagow, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a reply to a question of a Socialist Deputy during a sitting of the Budget Commission of the Reichstag, had stated that Belgian neutrality was determined by international treaties and that Germany was determined to respect those treaties. Baron van der Elst reminded Herr von Below of these facts. The latter not only admitted their accuracy but added that he was certain "that the sentiments expressed at that time had not changed."

It was open to us to believe in the sincerity of statements made on different occasions by German diplomats and statesmen, although the Imperial Government had refrained from making the official declaration on which we counted.

Indeed in late years several incidents appear to have drawn closer the ties which bound the two countries and their ruling houses together. The brilliant part taken by Germany in the Brussels Exhibition of 1910 and the warm welcome given to the German representatives, the visit of the Emperor, the Empress and Princess Victoria Louise to the Royal Family, the marks of friendship lavished on the King by the Emperor William, all drove from our minds any thought that Germany was entertaining hostile plans and meditating invasion or conquest.

The Emperor had been received at Brussels with a sympathy which, as he declared, greatly moved him. He had several times expressed to all those whom he met how greatly pleased and flattered he was. He had employed freely his seductive talents, talking with familiarity, freedom and charm. He showed himself particularly gracious to the Burgomaster of Brussels, M. Max, who had received him formally at the Town Hall. Three years afterwards on the occasion of the "joyeuse entrée" of the King and Queen into Liège, the Emperor had directed General von Emmich to go to that town and greet our Sovereigns in his name. The Imperial Envoy, during a banquet at which he sat next to our Minister of Justice, M. Carton de Wiart, had expressed to the latter his admiration for the institutions of the Belgian people, their virtues and the merits of their King. That was in August, 1913. In August, 1914, the same General von Emmich was in command of the attack on the forts of Liège. Lastly, everyone knows how Germans were treated in Belgium, and what an important position they had taken in the business world. At Antwerp the increase of German influence due to the action of powerful shipping houses and rich merchant princes had been long noticeable. At Brussels there was scarcely an important bank whose Board of Directors did not include representatives of German finance and industry.

Many members of the German colony were warmly received in society at Brussels and Antwerp; freely enjoyed cordial Belgian hospitality and did not shrink from seeking honours as well as profit amongst us.

The Government on the other hand, faithful to the policy of strict neutrality which all Belgian ministries have observed ever since the State came into existence, applied its energies, so far as it could, to maintaining a balance between the influences of the two neighbouring countries in public opinion. Sympathy for France is natural in a country which is so near to her in language and civilisation and in the great likeness of many of her civil and political institutions. Hence came at times, in certain controversies, assertions of preference for France which entailed some danger of wounding German pride and gave rise to mistrust and misunderstanding. The Government on several occasions intervened discreetly to redress the balance in public opinion, and on my own personal knowledge I can offer an important piece of evidence on this point.

About a year ago the Government asked me, though I belonged to the opposition, to approach some of my friends in the Liberal press with a view to inducing them to discuss with reserve and prudence certain questions as to German policy which were the subject of agitation at the moment. I willingly undertook this mission, for I have always been of opinion that it was necessary in our neutral country only to examine international affairs from the point of view of Belgium, considering only our position in Europe and the necessity of preserving friendship with our neighbours on both sides.

A still more characteristic incident took place on the 2nd August, the very day of the ultimatum. During the morning a Brussels paper, the "Petit Bleu," published an article headed "Long live France; Down with German Barbarism." The Minister of Justice, M. Carton de Wiart, ordered all the copies of the paper to be seized and directed proceedings to be taken against the publisher. It is clear that, up to the eleventh hour, the Government's anxiety was to anticipate and suppress even any moral breach of neutrality.

Belgium thus was guiltless, her attitude was correct in all respects; nothing in her policy or her domestic conduct offered any point for criticism. Germany had no cause for complaint against her.

Since then an attempt has been made by the publication and garbling of certain documents to represent falsely that the Belgian Government, long before the war, had taken sides with England and plotted against Germany.

By a search in the records of the War Department at Brussels, the Germans have brought to light a Minute by the Chief of the Belgian General Staff, written in 1906, and a note by Baron Greindl, our Minister at Berlin, dated 1911, on the subject of the measures of defence to be taken by Belgium in case of a Franco-German war, and the violation by Germany of Belgian neutrality. An attempt has been made to mislead public feeling by surrounding this document with sophistical comment intended to throw suspicion on Belgian policy, and to weave a legend of duplicity around the Government.

As a matter of fact these papers have no real importance. In order to judge fairly our military policy, it would be necessary to

have a knowledge of all the documents in which it is revealed and set out. Let them be published; they would provide a striking justification of our action. In fact the Memorandum now in question was drawn up by the Chief of the General Staff, General Ducarne, as a result of conversations between him and Colonel Barnardiston, the Military Attaché of the British Legation, on the subject of the contingency of the violation of Belgian neutrality by Germany in a war between that Power and France. Similarly Baron Greindl's note has reference to a plan for the defence of Luxemburg drawn up on the same hypothesis, which is the fruit of the personal action of the head of the first division of the Department of War.

The conversations between Colonel Barnardiston and General Ducarne dealt only with technical military problems and had not the smallest influence on policy. This is all the more apparent when it is realised that at the moment when these conversations took place the relations between England and Belgium were somewhat strained. In 1906 the difficulties which arose from the Congo question were reaching their culminating point.

As to Baron Greindl's note, it dates from the period when the Agadir incident had troubled the peace of Europe and when the violation of Belgian territory by the Imperial armies in case of a Franco-German war had been pointed out as a useful and probable operation by the chief writers in Germany, for example Bernhardi and Von der Goltz.

In addition the documents published have only an academic character, were never considered by the Belgian Government, and did not produce any result. In reality they are wholly devoid of any political meaning.

And never at any time, neither then, nor before, nor afterwards, has the Belgian Government ever been invited to enter or ever thought of entering into more intimate relations with the Triple Entente than with the Triple Alliance. Its sole care throughout has been to maintain completely, absolutely, and scrupulously, neutrality in word and deed.

The German press, when it waves these innocuous papers about is merely obeying the word of command. The object is by a clever counter attack to relieve Germany of the responsibility which weighs heavily upon her for an open disregard of a sacred engagement.

III.

Up to the last moment the German representatives used all their efforts to reassure the Belgian Government and to mislead public opinion.

On the 1st August the Military Attaché of the German Legation went to the Minister of War to offer his congratulations on the order and rapidity of the mobilisation operations and took care to advertise this move by a communication to the press.

Next day, 2nd August, the fatal day, a sensational statement by the German Minister gave great satisfaction in Brussels. Interviewed by a reporter to one of our big daily papers he said to him "Perhaps the house of your neighbour may catch fire but your house will remain untouched." This statement printed

in large type was published in a special edition and had a wide circulation. Public confidence, which had been shaken by the news of the violation of the neutrality of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, was reassured. The horizon seemed to grow light again.

On the same day, three hours afterwards, at seven in the evening, Herr von Below went to the Foreign Office and communicated the German ultimatum to the Belgian Government. Twelve hours of the night were allowed for the reply. None of us can ever forget the tragic night which followed.

The Members of the Cabinet and Ministers of State met together under the Chairmanship of the King and deliberated.

There were two possible courses of action open to us: The first was to allow a free passage to the German armies in their march on France and to obtain a large indemnity for the damage suffered; that would have meant the friendship of Germany to-day and her sovereignty to-morrow. It would also have meant the tearing up of the title deeds of the Belgian nation and the violation by her own hand of the neutrality which had been decreed by Europe and accepted by Belgium and treason to the duties imposed upon us by that neutrality. The alternative was to run the danger of war and invasion, to oppose the most formidable military power in the world and to keep our honour unstained, to maintain our title, to respect our treaties.

There was no discussion. Our decision was plain before us. It was taken at once. We decided to protest and to resist.

The reply was drafted in the Foreign Office. It was taken to the Palace and approved unanimously by the King and the Council. At seven in the morning on the 3rd August it was handed to the German Minister.

What reasons had Germany given for demanding from Belgium a free passage, the abandonment of her rights, and the surrender of her territory.

The ultimatum said "Reliable information has been received by the German Government to the effect that French forces intend to march on the line of the Meuse by Givet and Namur."

This was only a pretext. It is disproved by facts: For several weeks the Belgian army, unsupported, defended Belgian soil.

The childishness of the argument was so obvious to those who used it that from the very beginning they invented others which were not less absurd.

During the night of the 2nd—3rd August while the text of the reply to the ultimatum was being copied in the Foreign Office the German Minister was announced. He was received by Baron van der Elst and told the latter with every sign of lively emotion that he was directed by his Government to inform him that although war had not been declared a patrol of French cavalry had crossed the frontier and that French dirigibles had thrown bombs. Baron van der Elst asked where this had happened. "In Germany," replied Herr von Below. Baron van der Elst observed that in that case he did not understand the object of Herr von Below's visit, but the latter then explained that the acts

which he mentioned constituted a violation of international law, and that it must therefore be supposed that France would continue to violate that law.

The German Generals, during the first days of hostilities, invented in their turn fresh grounds of complaint.

On the 4th August the first German soldiers arrived at Warsage. They distributed to the inhabitants a proclamation signed by General von Emmich, which states that "To my great regret the German troops find themselves compelled to cross the Belgian frontier. They are acting under the compulsion of inevitable necessity, Belgian neutrality having already been violated by French officers who have crossed Belgian territory in disguise in a motor car and entered Germany."

Thus it appears that Germany declared war upon us because French officers in disguise had secretly passed along Belgian roads in a motor car.

General von Bulow has recourse to another story.

On the 9th August he issued a proclamation "To the Belgian People" in which the following passage occurs:

> "We are fighting the Belgian army solely to force a passage towards France which your Government has wrongfully refused to us although they have allowed the French to make a military reconnaissance, a fact which your papers have concealed from you."

Lastly, American defenders of German policy—very few indeed in number, and little heeded—have in their pro-German zeal invented more extraordinary justifications for the invasion of Belgium. One of them, a professor at a University, has the audacity to state that Belgium had tacitly authorised France to violate her neutrality during July by permitting French officers to inspect our fortifications, and that France, with the consent of our Government, was prepared to use Belgian territory as a base of operations. Another, also a professor, does not scruple to affirm without the least attempt at proof that the Belgian army has been trained by French officers, and that Belgium for twenty-five years has been a vassal State of France. If that is true, how is it that Germany allowed it? What explanation is there for the fact that until the striking of the dark hour when she brought her guns into action against us she never ceased to lavish upon us marks of sympathy?

These absurd fairy tales are spread about with skill, and there is some danger that they may take people in.

It is a sufficient answer to them to state the words of the ultimatum itself, which does not impute any fault to Belgium, which makes no complaint against her, and which confines itself to attributing to the French troops the "intention" of passing through Belgian territory.

In addition, the categorical public statement to the Reichstag by the Imperial Chancellor destroys every pretext, every excuse, every attempt at justification. On the 4th August, Herr von Bethmann Hollweg expressed himself as follows:—

> "We are in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and perhaps have

already entered Belgian territory. That is a breach of international law . . . the wrong we thereby commit we will try to make good as soon as our military aims have been attained."

Thus, to accomplish her military plans, Germany intentionally violated international law, deliberately committed an injustice, placed the interests of her defence above right and above treaties.

Besides, what do treaties matter? The Chancellor put his point of view without any reticence to the British Ambassador at Berlin. "Just for a word," he said, "neutrality, a word which in war time so often has been disregarded, just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war."

These confessions revealed the methods of thought which have directed German policy: any idea of right has been set aside; brutal utilitarianism dominates them. Bismarck condensed it in this cynical formula—"Where the Power of Prussia is in question, I know no law."

Belgium is innocent. Her cause is pure.

Neutral in perpetuity by the decision of Europe, her duty was to defend her neutrality and her independence against any attack from wheresoever it might come. A duty imposed upon her by her own dignity and by her loyalty towards the Powers who had laid neutrality upon her and assumed the obligation to guarantee it.

To serve one of those Powers was to betray the rest.

It is a principle of international law that neutral territory is inviolable. It should have been doubly impossible for Belgian territory to be violated by Germany, inasmuch as she was bound by Treaty not only to respect it herself, but even to protect it if others threatened any attempt against it.

Germany has disregarded her engagements; Belgium has remained faithful to her word.

In the drama which is being played upon the stage of the world Belgium represents "right." If a nation is permitted in the twentieth century to tear up treaties, to trample down the weak, to crush a little people to satisfy the ambition of the great, we must despair of the modern world. The whole building of civilisation would crumble. International law, respect for nationalities, the liberty of peoples, the observance of the most solemn engagements, everything would be sacrificed to caprice, the arbitrament of force.

Belgium, proud and confident, lays her case before the judgment of the world.

PAUL HYMANS.

MEETING OF THE BELGIAN CHAMBERS.

Sitting of the 4th August, 1914.

King's Speech.

Gentlemen,

Never since 1830 has a more grave moment come to Belgium: the integrity of our territory is threatened.

The strength of our just cause, the sympathy which Belgium, proud of her free institutions, and of her conquests in the moral world, has never ceased to enjoy with other nations, the fact that our independent existence is necessary for the balance of power in Europe, these considerations give rise to hope that the events which we fear will not take place.

But if our hopes fail, if we must resist the invasion of our soil and must defend our threatened homes, this duty, hard though it be, will find us armed and prepared for the greatest sacrifices (cheers and cries of "Long Live the King and Long Live Belgium").

From this moment, with a view to meet every contingency the valiant youth of our nation stand ready firmly resolved with the traditional tenacity and calmness of the Belgians to defend their fatherland at a moment of danger (cheers).

To them I send a brotherly greeting in the name of the nation (cheers and cries of Long Live the Army) throughout Flanders and the country of the Wallonie in town and country one sentiment alone fills every heart—patriotism; one vision alone fills every mind—our threatened independence. One duty alone is laid upon our wills, stubborn resistance (applause, cheers).

At this grave moment two virtues are indispensable—courage, calm (renewed cheers) but firm, and close union among all Belgians.

Striking evidence of both these virtues is already before the eyes of a nation full of enthusiasm.

The faultless mobilisation of our army, the multitude of volunteers, the devotion of the civil population, the self-sacrifice of families have shown incontestably that the whole Belgian people is carried away by stimulating courage (applause). The moment has come to act.

I have called you together, gentlemen, to give to the Legislative Chambers an opportunity to associate themselves with the impulses of the people in the same sentiment of sacrifice. Gentlemen, you will know how to deal urgently with all the measures which the situation requires for the war and for public order (general assent).

When I see this enthusiastic gathering in which there is only one party, that of the fatherland (enthusiastic cheers and cries of Long Live Belgium), in which at this moment all hearts beat as one, my mind goes back to the Congress of 1830, and I ask of you gentlemen, are you determined unswervingly to maintain intact the whole patrimony of our ancestors (Yes, yes, from every side).

No one in the country will fail in his duty.

The army, strong and disciplined, is fit to do this task: my Government and I have full confidence in its leaders and its soldiers. (Hear, hear.)

The Government, firmly attached to the population and supported by them, is conscious of its responsibilities, and will bear them to the end with the deliberate conviction that the efforts of all united in the most fervent and generous patriotism will safeguard the supreme good of the country.

If the foreigner, disregarding the neutrality whose every duty we have always observed scrupulously should violate our territory, he will find all Belgians grouped around their sovereign who will never betray his coronation oath and around a Government possessing the absolute confidence of the entire nation. (Cheers on all the Benches.)

I have faith in our destiny; a country which defends itself commands the respect of all; such a country shall never perish. (Hear, hear. Long live the King, long live Belgium.)

God will be with us in this just cause (fresh applause).

Long live independent Belgium (long and unanimous cheers from the Assembly and from the Galleries).

PROCLAMATION BY THE KING.

Soldiers,

Without the least provocation on our side a neighbour, arrogant in his strength, has torn up the treaties which bear his signature and violated the land of our fathers.

Because we have been worthy of ourselves, because we have refused to stain our honour, he attacks us. The whole world stands marvelling at our loyal attitude: may the respect and esteem of the whole world strengthen you in these supreme moments.

The nation, seeing how her independence was threatened, has risen in enthusiasm and her children have rushed to the frontier. Valiant soldiers in a holy cause, I have every confidence in your stubborn valour, and greet you in the name of Belgium. Your fellow citizens are proud of you. You will triumph for you are the army which fights on the side of justice.

Cæsar said of your ancestors, "Of all the people of Gaul, the Belgians are the bravest."

May glory be yours, army of the Belgian people. Remember when you are before the enemy that you are fighting for liberty and for your threatened homes. Remember, Flemings, the battle of the Golden Spurs, and you, Wallons of Liège, who are at this moment at the place of honour, remember the 600 Franchimontois.

Soldiers! I am leaving Brussels to place myself at your head.

Given at the Palace of Brussels, this 5th day of August, 1914.

Albert.

OBSERVATIONS ON BELGIAN NEUTRALITY.

Reply to German Charges.

In its issue of 26th November the "Kölnische Zeitung" writes:—"We were justified in violating Belgian territory because Belgium did not observe the duties of neutrality. This truth appears forcibly in two unassailable documents: First, that published by the 'Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,' proving that there was in existence a secret agreement between Belgium and England for the co-operation of the military forces of these two countries in a war against Germany. Secondly, adds the 'Kölnische Zeitung,' it is shown by the report of the confidential conversation between General Jungbluth and Colonel Bridges that the English intended to land troops in Belgium in any case, even if her help had not been asked for by Belgium."

The argument of the German press consists, therefore, in justifying the violation of Belgian neutrality by Germany by reason of the fact that Belgium had herself failed in the duties of neutrality by negotiating a military agreement against Germany. This argument of the German press is false. It is disproved by the facts and by the documents themselves.

When, on the 14th October, the "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" published for the first time the secret Barnardiston minute, we challenged it to prove the existence of a military agreement between Belgium and England. It did not take up this challenge, and the facsimile documents which it published are wholly irrelevant. It would be impossible to find in them any evidence that Belgium had not observed the strictest obligations of neutrality.

What was it that in fact took place in 1906?

Colonel Barnardiston, British Military Attaché, called at the end of January at the office of the Chief of the 1st Division of the Ministry of War, General Ducarne, and had an interview with him. Colonel Barnardiston asked General Ducarne whether Belgium was ready to defend her neutrality. He received an affirmative reply. He then proceeded to enquire the number of days necessary for the mobilisation of our army.

"It can take place in four days," said the General.

"How many men can you mobilise?" pursued the Military Attaché.

The General said that we could mobilise 180,000 men.

After having received this information, Colonel Barnardiston declared that in the event of the violation of our neutrality by Germany, England would send into Belgium 100,000 men for our defence.

He still pressed the question whether we were ready to resist a German invasion.

The General replied that we were ready to defend Liège against Germany, Namur against France, and Antwerp against England.

Several interviews followed between the Chief of the General Staff and the Military Attaché on the subject of the measures that England would take with a view to giving effect to her guarantee.

In examining this question the Chief of the General Staff was only performing his most elementary duty, namely, to examine in detail the dispositions which would enable Belgium to resist, either alone or with the help of her guarantors, a violation of her neutrality.

On the 10th May, 1906, General Ducarne addressed to the Minister for War a minute on his interviews with the British Military Attaché. In this minute the point is twice emphasised that the sending of British help into Belgium was contingent on the violation of Belgian neutrality. Nay more, a marginal note by the Minister (which by a refinement of bad faith on the part of the "Norddeutsche Allgemeine" was left untranslated in order that it might escape the notice of most German readers) establishes incontestably that the entry of British troops into Belgium would only take place after the violation of our neutrality by Germany. The course of events has sufficiently proved that these anticipations were justified.

These very natural interviews between the Chief of the General Staff and the British Military Attaché simply show the serious apprehensions of Great Britain on the subject of a possible violation by Germany of Belgian neutrality.

Were these apprehensions legitimate? To be convinced on this point it is only necessary to read the works of the great German military writers of the time: von Bernhardi, von Schliefenbach and von der Goltz.

Were the interviews between General Ducarne and Colonel Barnardiston followed by any convention or agreement?

This question is answered for us by Germany herself in the document which she has published in the "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" of the 25th October.

This document relates to an interview between General Jungbluth and Colonel Bridges, and furnishes striking evidence that the interview which took place in 1912 on the subject of putting into effect England's guarantee had no result, and matters were at the same stage as they had been left six years before in 1906. No document could more clearly establish the loyalty with which the Belgian Government fulfilled their international obligations. Colonel Bridges had apparently said that since, in view of recent developments, we were not able to defend our neutrality, the British Government would have immediately landed troops on our coast, even if we had not asked for help. To which General Jungbluth is said to have immediately replied, "But you could not disembark troops on our coast without our consent."

Should so great an importance be attached to the views of a military attaché which, we are in a position to prove, had never been submitted to the British Foreign Office?

Did he hold the view, which we hold to be false, although it is maintained by certain writers, that in the case of a violation of neutrality the intervention of a guarantor is justified, even in the absence of an appeal from the country whose neutrality has been guaranteed?

We do not know. One thing is certain, namely, that the military attaché did not persist in face of the General's objections.

Was Belgium bound to acquaint her guarantors with these interviews?

As to the first interview, Colonel Barnardiston was not in a position to enter into an agreement, nor was General Ducarne in a position to register a promise of help. The incriminating conversations, moreover, were of a purely military character and could have had no political significance whatever. They were never considered by the Government and only became known long afterwards to the British Foreign Office.

As to the interview between General Jungbluth and Colonel Bridges, ought the Powers to have been warned that the latter had expressed an opinion in which neither the Belgian nor the British Government would concur, and against which General Jungbluth had immediately protested without his visitor having thought it necessary to press the point?

The would be "justification" of Germany falls back against herself. In his speech of the 4th August at the Reichstag, and in his interview the day before with the British Ambassador, the Imperial Chancellor declared that the reason for the attack on Belgium was strategical necessity.

That is our case.

Before leaving Ostend, the Belgian Government addressed the following proclamation to the people:

PROCLAMATION.

Citizens,

For nearly two and a half months, at the cost of heroic efforts, Belgian soldiers have been defending inch by inch the soil of their country. The enemy was fully reckoning on annihilating our army at Antwerp, but this hope was falsified by a retreat which was carried out in perfect order and calmness and we thus ensured the preservation of our military forces which will continue to strive without ceasing for the most just and noble of causes.

Henceforth these forces will operate on our Southern frontier where they will be supported by the Allies. With their brave help the victory of Right is certain.

Nevertheless, the circumstances of the moment require to-day a new ordeal in addition to the sacrifices already made by the Belgian nation with a courage which is only equalled by the depth of the sacrifice. At the risk of furthering the plans of the invader it is necessary for the Government to establish itself provisionally in a place where, in touch on the one hand with the Belgian army, and on the other hand with those of France and England, it can continue to carry out its functions and preserve the continuity of national sovereignty.

That is why the Government is to-day leaving Ostend with a grateful recollection of the welcome that it has received in that town. It will be provisionally established at Havre, where the generous friendship of the Government of the French Republic assures for it both its sovereign rights and also the unrestricted exercise of its authority and the performance of its duty.

Citizens,

This temporary ordeal which our patriotism has to-day to face will, we are convinced, be promptly avenged. On the other hand, the Belgian public services will continue to exercise their functions so far as circumstances admit. The King and His Government rely on your wisdom and patriotism. Do you on your side rely on our ardent devotion, on the valour of our army, and on the help of our Allies, to hasten the hour of our common deliverance?

Our dear country, betrayed and odiously treated by one of the Powers that had sworn to guarantee her neutrality, awakens an ever-growing admiration throughout the whole world. Thanks to the unity, courage and foresight of all her children she will remain worthy of this admiration, which is her comfort to-day. To-morrow she will arise from her ordeals greater and more beautiful for having suffered in the cause of justice, honour and civilisation itself.

Long live Belgium, free and independent.

Ostend, 13th October, 1914.

The Minister for War, Ch. de Broqueville; The Minister of Justice, H. Carton de Wiart; The Minister for Foreign Affairs, J. Davignon; The Minister of the Interior, P. Berryer; The Minister of Science and Arts, P. Poullet; The Minister of Finance, A. Van de Vyvere; The Minister for Agriculture and Public Works, G. Helleputte; The Minister for Industry and Labour, Arm. Hubert; The Minister for Railways, Marine, Posts and Telegraphs, P. Seghers; The Minister for Colonies, J. Renkin.

The following members of the diplomatic corps who had accompanied the Government to Antwerp and Ostend have followed it to Havre: —

His Excellency Monsignor Tacci, Papal Ambassador.

His Excellency M. Djuvara, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to H.M. The King of Rumania.

His Excellency Prince Koudacheff, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to H.M. The Emperor of Russia.

His Excellency M. Klobukowski, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to H.M. The King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor of India.

His Excellency M. Le Jonkheer de Weede, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to H.M. The Queen of the Netherlands.

His Excellency Nousret Sadoullah Bey, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to H.M. The Sultan of Turkey.

His Excellency M. Carignani, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to H.M. The King of Italy.

M. Speridan Levidis, Resident Minister to H.M. The King of Greece.

M. Chiyuki Yamanaka, Japanese Chargé d'Affaires.

M. Leif-Bogh, Norwegian Chargé d'Affaires.

M. Alfredo Viel, Consul-General attached to the Chilian Legation.

Military operations having compelled the Government to establish its seat provisionally at Havre, the President of the French Republic was informed of this decision and at once replied in the following letter addressed to His Majesty The King: —

Bordeaux, 11th October, 1914.

His Majesty King Albert,
Ostend,

I have just been informed of the decision taken by the Royal Government. The Government of the Republic is profoundly moved and will immediately take all necessary steps to ensure that Your Majesty and Your Ministers, during their sojourn in France, will enjoy independence and sovereignty. I should like to say to Your Majesty personally how proud the French are to offer to You, until the hour of our common victory, hospitality in the town which you have chosen, and I beg to assure you of my unalterable friendship.

Raymond Poincaré.

His Majesty The King at once replied in the following terms: —

Ostend, 12th October, 1914.

Monsieur le Président,

I am deeply touched by the hospitality which France has been good enough to extend to the Belgian Government and with the steps which the Government of the Republic have taken to assure our full independence and sovereignty. We await the hour of common victory with an unwavering confidence. We fight side by side for a just cause and our courage will never be shaken.

I have to assure you, Monsieur le Président, of my unalterable affection.

Albert.

M. de Broqueville, Minister for War, who remained with His Majesty The King and the Army, immediately on his arrival on French soil, sent the following telegram to the President of the Republic at Bordeaux: —

To His Excellency Monsieur Poincaré,
President of the French Republic,
Bordeaux.

Dunkirk, 14th October, 1914.

At the moment when the fortune of arms leads the Royal Government to the hospitable soil of the great nation that is befriending Belgium, that Government has the honour to

tender to the Head of the Republic an expression of its deepest respect, and begs you to be so good as to accept the assurance of its unwavering confidence in the triumph of right. Belgium rejoices that proud and generous France, united with Great Britain and Russia, should champion this cause.

CHARLES DE BROQUEVILLE.

The President of the Republic replied in the following terms to M. de Broqueville:—

To His Excellency MONSIEUR DE BROQUEVILLE,
Minister for War,
Dunkirk.

Bordeaux, 14th October, 1914.

As I personally assured His Majesty King Albert, France is proud to receive on her soil to-day the Government of a noble nation which is with such heroism defending its national independence and upholding the cause of international law, so outrageously violated. The Government of the Republic does not fail to identify the cause of Belgium with her own, and has made all necessary preparations for the Royal Government to observe the free exercise of its powers in the town of Havre. The certainty of final victory will lighten for you, as for the French districts already invaded, a brief ordeal from which our countries will emerge more closely united, and stronger than before.

RAYMOND POINCARÉ.

On Tuesday the 13th October, 1914, at 8 p.m., the members of the Belgian Government, with the exception of M. de Broqueville, Minister for War, who stayed with the King and the Army, arrived at Havre on the Belgian mail steamer, *Pieter-de-Coninck*. They were accompanied by members of the corps diplomatique, by M. Schollaert, President of the Chamber of Representatives and Minister of State, and by MM. van den Heuvel, Liebaert, Cooreman, Huysmans, Count Goblet d'Alviella, Hymans and Vandervelde, Ministers of State.

They were welcomed in the name of the French Government by His Excellency M. Augagneur, Minister of Marine, accompanied by Mr. William Martin, *introducteur des ambassadeurs*, together with all the officials of the Department of Seine-Inferieure, and the town of Havre. Military honours were accorded to the members of the Government.

Great pains had been taken by the French Government, and thorough preparations had been made for the installation of the Belgian Ministers and their various departmental staffs at Sainte-Adresse. This work was entrusted by the French Government to M. Hennion, who was attached to the Belgian Government for

the period of its stay at Havre. As soon as it was installed, the Government addressed to the President of the French Republic the following telegram:—

Le Havre,
14th October, 1914.

To His Excellency Monsieur le President of the French Republic at Bordeaux.

The members of the Belgian Government and the Ministers of State installed at Havre beg the President of the French Republic to accept the expression of its deepest respect. They convey their cordial thanks to the French Government for having been so good as to appoint M. Augagneur, Minister of Marine, to receive them on their arrival, and to welcome them in your name. They also express their great gratitude for the arrangements made to facilitate the free exercise of the rights and duties of Belgian national sovereignty, pending the hour not far distant when the final triumph of right will sound. They will never forget with what noble alacrity France, guarantor of our neutrality, added to the observance of her plighted word every proof of fine friendship and devoted succour.

H. Carton de Wiart,
Minister of Justice.

Monsieur le President of the French Republic replied in the following terms:—

Bordeaux,
15th October, 1914.

His Excellency Monsieur Carton de Wiart, Belgian Minister of Justice, Le Havre.

I thank you and your colleagues of the Royal Government for the sentiments that you have so kindly expressed. The population of Havre, by the welcome which it has given you, has interpreted the feelings of the whole of France. By virtue of treaty obligations we were guarantors of Belgium's neutrality, and we are not the people to disavow our signature. But the heroism of your people and the blood that we have poured out together in a common cause have made our duty still more sacred, and we will fulfil it to the very end with warm and brotherly affection.

Raymond Poincaré.

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